

To the Members of the California State Assembly:

I have signed AB 2185 which requires health care service plans to provide coverage for equipment used in the treatment of pediatric asthma. Increasing the availability and affordability of essential medical equipment for children with asthma is vitally important to the management of this disease.

Asthma is the most chronic disease of childhood with prevalence in California's children ages 0-5 estimated to be 8.8 percent and in children ages 6-11 estimated to be 13.7 percent. In 2000, hospitalizations represented the largest direct medical expense related to asthma with the average cost per hospitalization at \$13,000. Most of these emergency and hospital visits were preventable with appropriate asthma management.

This bill helps manage asthma; however, it does not help reduce the incidence of the disease. One of the contributing factors to pediatric asthma is air pollution. Improving the quality of our air is a priority of my Administration. By meeting our air quality standards, we can significantly reduce the incidence of pediatric asthma. Through the budget and other legislative efforts we have committed millions of dollars towards clean air programs that are assured to enhance the condition of air for our children.

For the reasons stated above, I have signed this bill.

Sincerely,

Arnold Schwarzenegger